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ABSTRACT

Four newsletter issues address aspects of adult immigrant education for employment. The first focuses on the manufacturing industry, with articles describing a Pima County Adult Education (Arizona) program concerning quality standards, an El Paso Community College (Texas) program for employees of companies in transition, and survey results on selling workplace English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) programs to employers and employees. The second issue highlights school-to-work (STW) and vocational ESL instruction, including inclusion of bilingual/ESL students in STW programs and use of the SCANS (Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills) skills to prepare students for employment. The third issue concerns identifying the impact of workplace education programs, including articles on use of the "return on investment" concept to provide program data meaningful to businesses, the multiple perspectives (company, employee, union, educator) on workplace education, and a literacy audit process that customizes programs for both employers and employees. The fourth issue concerns making instruction relevant to the workplace, with articles on a program using holistic instructional methods, workplace materials, and broad-based participation by stakeholders; how to help learners transfer skills to the workplace; and incorporation of the SCANS skills into instruction. (MSE) (Adjunct ERIC Clearinghouse on Literacy Education)

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PAIE
Project in Adult Immigrant Education

CAL
No. 4, Spring 1996

The Connector

Forging Links Between Language and Employment Skills for Adult Immigrants

This issue of *The Connector* focuses on the manufacturing industry with articles describing Pima County Adult Education's program which provides training to meet quality standards including ISO 9000 certification; El Paso Community College's program which uses a unique, dynamic curriculum-development process to train employees of companies in transition; and the results of a survey and interviews on how to sell workplace ESL programs to employers and employees. A two-page, annotated bibliography, **ESL Instruction in the Manufacturing Industry**, is now available from Ana Romes at the Center for Applied Linguistics in Washington, DC. (Contact information is on page 3.)

Our next newsletter and annotated bibliography will focus on vocational ESL and school-to-work issues and programs. Please contact us with suggestions for articles or bibliographic resources.

PROGRAM PROFILE: Meeting Quality Standards in Manufacturing

Pima County Adult Education's (PCAE) Workplace Education Project in Tucson, Arizona has been in existence since November 1988, when it was awarded its first National Workplace Literacy Program grant through the U.S. Department of Education. Since that time, the Workplace Education Project has trained over 2,500 workers at 40 worksites in the Tucson area. After four rounds of federal funding, the project has transitioned from a partial to a total fee-for-service program. Participating worksites have included large and small manufacturing companies, educational institutions, government agencies, the military, hotels, a hospital, a healthcare clinic, a landscaping company, a nursing home, a laundry, and a casino. Twenty of the 40 worksites where PCAE has provided classes are manufacturing companies. About 1/3 of the 2,500 workers who have taken classes have been non-native speakers of English.

Onsite, customized classes and workshops have included but are not limited to Reading, Rapid Reading, Writing Essentials, Technical Writing, Math Fundamentals, Measurement, Algebra, SPC (Statistical Process Control) Charting, ESOL (English to Speakers of Other Languages), Accent Reduction, Spanish, Presentation Skills, Communication/Listening, Problem Solving, Quality Awareness, Team Building, and GED Test Preparation. Instructors have also provided a variety of workshops for company trainers, such as *How to Identify Low-level Readers* and *Overcoming Language Barriers: Techniques That Work*.

The ESOL Curriculum

The Workplace ESOL Curriculum addresses language competencies and functions in eight distinct topic areas: personal information; socializing at work; tools, supplies, equipment and materials; learning, doing and teaching the job; working in teams; health and safety; company policy, pay, and benefits; and performance review. These topics were selected by identifying common themes among numerous site-specific curricula. PCAE also conducts a job-task analysis for each worksite and adjusts the curriculum to meet employer and employee needs.

The curriculum has evolved considerably over the years. With the growing emphasis on teams in the workplace, PCAE has included such language competencies as *participating in brainstorming* and *facilitating a meeting* in its curriculum. And the curriculum is likely to evolve even more with the increasing prominence of ISO (International Standards Organization) requirements in manufacturing. ISO 9000, adopted by 91 member countries, has become the international quality system standard for manufacturing, trade, and communication industries and enables companies to compete in the global marketplace.

Meeting International Standards

A clear example of the project's responsiveness to a customer's needs occurred when Allied Signal Controls and Aerospace applied for ISO certification while an ESOL class was being taught at their site. As the time for their first ISO audit approached, learners increasingly voiced concern about their ability to satisfactorily answer the kinds of questions typically posed by ISO auditors, such as "What is the procedure for the process you are performing?" and "What do you do when a non-conformance exists?" To address learner concerns, the company provided the instructor with a list of the questions most critical to workers in their positions. The instructor came up with a variety of exercises to ensure that learners understood the questions and could respond, paraphrase, or ask for clarification as necessary. Scenarios were conducted at the workplace to simulate the audit. Learners had the opportunity to play the roles of auditor, team leader, and workers. In

(continued on next page)

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subsequent feedback sessions, learners admitted that despite the classroom camaraderie, they felt a certain pressure to perform well during the scenarios. And, because learners gained familiarity with the language and the routine of audits during these exercises, the simulations helped reduce their nervousness during the actual audit.

Future Challenges

The success of workplace programs depends on the ability of educational providers to keep abreast of the needs of workers and companies in the continually changing U.S. workplace. Flexibility in curriculum development, in class scheduling, and in course offerings will put educational programs on the road to self-sufficiency. Since it is likely that the field has seen the last of federal dollars for workplace education, this is the ultimate challenge.

Linda Hellman, Manager, and Tom Woolley, ESOL Specialist, can be reached at the Workplace Education Project, Pima County Adult Education, 531 W. Plata, Suite 300, Tucson, AZ 85705; 520-884-8628; Fax: 520-884-8614.

For further information, see *Pima County Workplace Literacy Partnership, Final Report, May 1, 1993–April 30, 1995* (ED 384 752) and *Workplace Education Partnerships: Compromises, Promises, and Practices*, a presentation by L. Hellman at TESOL '95 that will soon be available from the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) system. For documents with ED numbers, contact ERIC at 1-800-443-ERIC.

Selling Workplace ESL Programs—To Employers AND Employees

Workplace ESL Programs have grown in number and visibility since the late 1980s in large part due to federal funding by the U.S. Department of Education's National Workplace Literacy Program. However, continued public funding is now uncertain, and many providers of workplace ESL and basic skills instructional programs are considering selling (marketing) their programs and services to employers without public funds. Once employers agree to offer instruction, the second phase of selling the program begins—selling participation to employees (recruiting).

Selling Programs to Employers

In a recent ERIC/PAIE Digest, *Selling Workplace ESL Instructional Programs*, Miriam Burt of the Center for Applied Linguistics explores the issue of why companies do and do not provide workplace basic skills and ESL instruction. Using data from a survey of businesses, Burt identifies three main reasons employers say they initiate workplace programs: as a prerequisite to training for quality improvement; because of the commitment of top management to training and education; and because of the sales effort of an educational provider.

Although some of the employers surveyed indicated that they were aware of employee deficits in basic skills and language proficiency, they had not initiated workplace programs. The main reasons given were cost of instruction; lack of information about program options and scheduling; and company tendencies to find other ways of dealing with basic skills and English language deficits such as pre-employment testing to screen out applicants with low scores, or organizing the workplace so that language minority employees have no contact with the public and are supervised in their native language.

To better understand how educational providers can sell their product to employers, Burt interviewed eighteen workplace ESL program directors, instructors, and other staff from several types of programs. Eight themes emerged from the interviews, many of which support the conclusions drawn from the survey data listed above. All of the themes cannot be listed here, but among them were these three:

- Offer short, discrete, highly targeted courses with a few specific, attainable goals; for example, courses in accent reduction, teamwork skills, and pre-quality improvement training.
- Develop realistic ways of documenting how instruction has improved performance in the workplace, such as increased numbers of written and oral suggestions made by learners at team meetings or increased numbers of learners asking to be cross-trained. More ambitious measures, such as promotions and raises, may not be realistic in a downsizing economy.
- Make certain that general managers and frontline supervisors strongly support the classes. Supervisors can arrange schedules so that workers can attend classes; they can provide opportunities on the job for them to use what they are learning; and they can encourage them to attend classes regularly.

Selling Programs to Employees

A couple of years ago, Judy Jameson, also of the Center for Applied Linguistics, was asked by the United Auto Workers-General Motors Human Resource Center in Auburn Hills, Michigan, to identify successful methods of recruiting language minority workers for participation in their Skill Centers, learning centers that offer a wide range of independent and group learning experiences.

Jameson interviewed a number of workplace ESL program directors and found that *none* had difficulty recruiting participants. In fact, most programs reported being swamped with more applicants than they could handle. One workplace literacy

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*(**Selling Workplace ESL** from previous page)*

partnership carefully planned its program and expected 400 participants on the first day—one thousand persons arrived.

The interviews revealed that workplace ESL programs commonly use a combination of the following recruitment methods:

- Announcements and articles in union and company newsletters
- Flyers and posters in English and other prevalent languages. These materials should provide very simple information since many potential participants have limited literacy skills both in English and their native language. The materials should include a way for workers to get further information orally.
- A very simple, noncommittal "Are You Interested" questionnaire or ballot can get potential participants to make a first contact with the program and can provide helpful planning information. Prompt, personal follow-up is important or workers are likely to feel the program isn't interested in them or that it is disorganized.
- A variety of interactive presentations can expose workers to information about the program without the worker having to initiate the action. One program held short presentations and meet-the-teacher sessions in the cafeteria at lunch time.
- Word of mouth, all agree, is the most powerful recruitment tool. Enlist your learners to aid in recruitment: Ask them what worked for them, have an open house, get them to bring a friend, and publish success stories in local newspapers.

Though recruiting a sufficient number of participants was not a problem for these programs, support among supervisors and management was. Several programs stated that the most important messages received by potential participants were *not* those planned and produced by the program. They were the subtle indications that it is not good to take time off from work for ESL training or that revealing a need to improve one's English will lead to a lessening of confidence in the employee. Programs need to educate managers and supervisors so that they understand the program's goals and know how these goals will specifically benefit the company. For example, programs should explain how enhanced English skills enable workers to make suggestions to improve a team's work, or to learn a specific new skill.

It takes time to sell workplace programs to employers and to ensure that supervisors have also bought into the program. However—with public funding for workplace basic skills and ESL programs uncertain—the time, energy, and resources invested in doing so will be well worth it.

For further information, request free copies of the digests *Selling Workplace ESL Instructional Programs* and *Evaluating Workplace ESL Instructional Programs* from Ana Romes. (See below for contact information.) ~~

Preparing ESL Workers to Work in Teams

Many industries are restructuring their work environments so that workers are organized into teams and quality production is a priority. These changes require language minority workers to learn new language and skills in order to participate. This article describes how a National Workplace Literacy Program (NWLP) project at El Paso Community College (EPCC) in Texas used a unique, dynamic, curriculum-development process to create an ESL communications course to meet these needs.

EPCC works with several employers in the El Paso area including Levi Strauss and Company, Baxter Convertors, and the Rio Grande Workers Alliance/AFL-CIO. The initial work of the project followed a traditional workplace curriculum-development process (using in-depth, job-specific needs assessments), but due to changing circumstances in the employers' plants, the approach had to change. In the end, this mid-project adjustment was one of the most positive outcomes of the project, according to curriculum coordinator Kay Taggart, and it has had a major impact on the project's current curriculum-development efforts and program planning.

When the project's business partners began to restructure their organizations, the traditional, job-specific curricula were suddenly outdated. Not only was the project faced with developing new curricula in very little time, but the work environment continued to change and managers and supervisors were unavailable to provide necessary input. Faced with this situation, EPCC designed a process to create a curriculum on

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communication and teamwork themes based on needs identified by the workers in their ESL classes. Interestingly, this dynamic curriculum-development process parallels the manufacturing industry's continuous process improvement model that EPCC staff had become familiar with as a part of their research on teams and total quality management (TQM).

How the Process Works

The dynamic curriculum-development process begins with learners suggesting topics on the themes of communication and teamwork during their classes. Instructors note these potential topics and compare their ideas at a weekly brainstorming/feedback meeting of instructors, the curriculum coordinator, and technical personnel who will videotape learners' role plays during the lesson.

The curriculum coordinator turns selected topics into lessons to be taught in the near future. These new lessons are implemented and feedback data are collected to revise them for future use and to provide ideas for new, related lessons.

Ideas for lessons are not hard to find. The curriculum coordinator reports that "Beginning in the first class period [the two initial lessons were designed by the workplace education staff], students offered up themes galore. Using comments like 'you know what else we have problems with?' or 'that reminds me of what happened last week,' students delivered music to our ears. They described difficult team interactions in detail and emptied their communication frustrations at our feet. All the instructors had to do was pay attention, take notes, and pass them along to me. I turned the students' comments into lessons and handed them back to the instructors."

Sample Course Content

One lesson suggested by the learners is entitled "Over the Back Fence: Dealing with Hearsay." In a time of rapid change in the workplace, rumors can be detrimental to morale.

This lesson begins with the learners playing the children's game of "Telephone." A whispered message is passed from ear to ear, becoming increasingly distorted. After the game, learners discuss reasons for the distortion of the communication. Then, the instructor guides a critical discussion on questions such as the following: What topics are often the subject of hearsay; what effects do rumors have on workers; and how do you deal with rumors you hear on the job?

Next, learners participate in an activity to identify rumors, how they get started, and their effects. For example, a rumor might be that NAFTA will cause them to lose their jobs and the plant will reopen in Mexico. This rumor is caused by speculation from media reports, and it may demoralize workers and even cause them to look for another job.

In another small group activity, learners share strategies, then develop a script to handle various situations involving rumors; for example, "When you are confronted with a rumor that could potentially damage you, your team, or your plant, what do you do? What strategies can you use to locate the source and address the issue? What specific things can you say when you locate the source(s)?"

At this point, videotaping begins. Learners practice specific language and strategies and then act out their scripts in front of the camera. Other learners discuss whether the language and strategies are realistic and whether they would be effective in real life situations. Finally, learners reflect on the lesson and its usefulness to them in their personal journals.

Videotaping is an integral component of this communications course. Kay Taggart states, "Student-produced videos can have rapid effects on students' communication development. The growth in self-esteem and the willingness to take risks in communications can be astounding when students role play in front of the camera and then critique their own communications. Supervisors told the instructors that people who had been very quiet on the plant floor were now communicating in English—and expertly!"

Although EPCC's instructors are enthusiastic about the communications course, this type of course and "just-in-time" development of curricula clearly require special qualities in instructors. Among the most important are flexibility; innovation; being comfortable in adult, learner-centered, whole language classrooms; and the ability to pick up on learners' needs and use their spontaneous input in lessons.

Why Use This Process

Though this dynamic, emergent, curriculum-development process was implemented, in part, because of a lack of time and resources, it turned out to be a positive change for several reasons. Traditional needs analysis is costly and tends to result in job-specific curricula that are soon outdated in today's rapidly changing workplace. Both workers and management want curricula that are less job-specific, meet job and non-job needs, and can be offered in short seminars rather than in longer courses. But, finally, and most importantly, the curriculum-development and instructional processes teach and practice the language and skills of team planning, decision-making, and continuous improvement.

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Further information about the EPCC project can be found in the following ERIC documents:

The Cutting Edge: Workplace English, Section 1: Project Handbook (ED 373 593) and *Instructional Guide* (ED 373 594) describe the earlier years of the project and its three-part, job-specific, video-based ESL curriculum for garment industry workers. (To order, contact ERIC at 1-800-443-ERIC.)

The Cutting Edge Instructional Guide: For Workplace Basics and Workplace Communications describes the dynamic curriculum-development process and communication course featured in this article. It will be submitted to ERIC in 1996. ~~

A Directory of ESP Trainers

The English for Specific Purposes Directory: An International Listing of Professional Language Trainers (1995) was published by Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Inc. (TESOL) to help organizations identify ESP specialists to deliver quality language training programs and to promote professional networking among ESP Special Interest Group members. In addition to alphabetical listings of ESP providers by country and state, the directory includes a list of qualifications of good providers, an overview of steps in the development of corporate programs, and information on evaluating language training approaches and client support. The directory is available from TESOL, 1600 Cameron Street, Suite 300, Alexandria, VA 22314; 703-836-0774; fax: 703-836-7864; $19.95 for TESOL members; $39.95 for non-members. ~~

Classroom Tip

Two common problems in workplace ESL programs are getting supervisors to support employee participation in the classes and to provide information about changes in learner performance on the job.

A seasoned teacher suggests that, periodically, as a group, the class write a summary of its learning for supervisors and management and ask them to look for instances of the learning being applied on the job. For example, the class could describe what they learned about making suggestions—that Americans often phrase suggestions as questions, that common gambits include "What do you think about..." or "What if we...", and that worker suggestions can help to improve the work process—and ask supervisors to give them feedback concerning their suggestions on the job. Supervisors could report back orally (either to the learners or the instructor) or in a short, written note. This produces supervisor feedback that is targeted to class objectives. It also makes supervisors aware of class goals so they can reinforce the transfer of learning to the job. Supervisors can also be asked to suggest situations or incidents that might be addressed in the curriculum. These activities fit the continuous process improvement model very well by providing input to the curriculum (needs assessment) and feedback on the transfer of learning to the job (evaluation). It may also improve supervisors' investment in the classes and their support in continuing them. ~~

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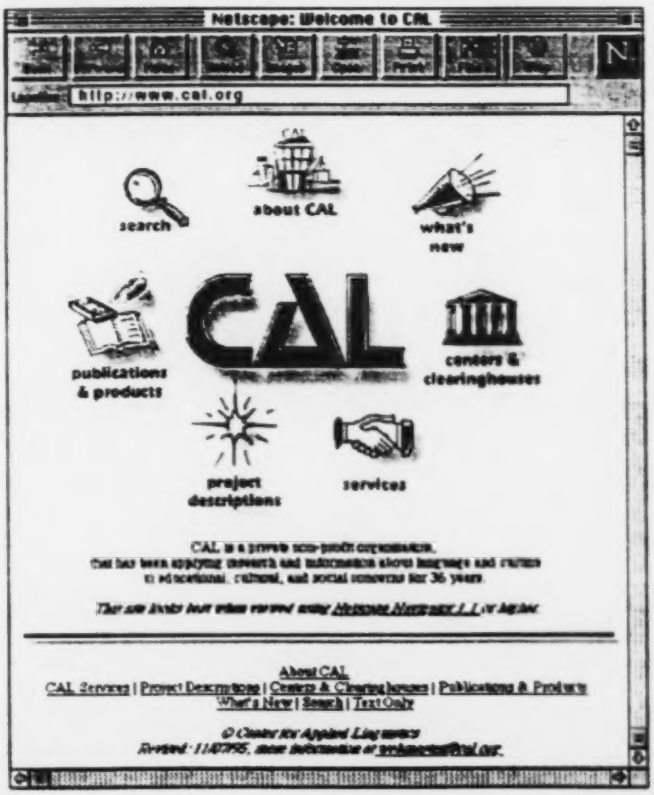

WE WANT YOU!

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Contact Lucinda Branaman at 202-429-9292, x253 or at lucinda@cal.org to be included.

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The Connector

Forging Links Between Language and Employment Skills for Adult Immigrants

This issue of *The Connector* focuses on School-to-Work (STW) and vocational ESL programs and issues. The lead article addresses the challenge of including bilingual/ESL students in STW programs; a second article describes how use of the SCANS skills and learner-centered ESL instructional practices can prepare secondary students and adult learners for employment. Please contact CAL with suggestions for future topics for this newsletter.

School to Work: Opportunities for Bilingual Education

School-to-Work programs provide a unique opportunity for bilingual/bicultural students to explore and prepare for high skill/high wage careers. The School-to-Work Opportunities Act (STWOA, Federal Public Law 103-329, H.R. 2884) of May 1994 established a national framework for the development of state School-to-Work systems. These systems enable youths to identify and navigate paths to productive and rewarding roles in the world of work.

"All Students"

One of the key requirements of School-to-Work (STW) systems is that they are for "all students." As defined by the Act, "all students" means "both male and female students from a broad range of backgrounds and circumstances...." This includes "disadvantaged students; students with diverse racial, ethnic, or cultural backgrounds; American Indians; Alaska natives; Native Hawaiians; students with disabilities; students with limited English proficiency; migrant children; school dropouts; and academically talented students."

Ensuring that the STW systems effectively serve "all students" is a challenge and an opportunity. Advocates for bilingual populations must ensure that STW systems do not stop bilingual students at programmatic gateways based on artificial criteria. They must also ensure that STW systems meet the needs of bilingual students (regardless of their English proficiency level) and provide real opportunities for them to develop the skills and knowledge needed to thrive in high skill/high wage careers.

Bringing together the worlds of bilingual education and STW requires new understanding on both sides. STW system and program designers need to learn about bilingual students' strengths, interests, and needs for support. Program personnel must learn to view bilingual students as assets to evolving STW systems and build in safeguards to ensure that they are not overlooked or excluded. Language educators and advocates for bilingual populations need to learn about STW (its structure, organizations, and partnerships) and become involved in the STW initiatives in their communities now.

Components of STW

Three primary components of STW are School-Based Learning, Work-Based Learning, and Connecting Activities. School-Based Learning includes high academic and skill standards, career exploration and counseling, periodic evaluation of student strengths and weaknesses, and at least one year of postsecondary education. Work-Based Learning, as defined by the National School-to-Work Office, includes structured employer-supervised instruction that takes place outside the traditional classroom, and paid and unpaid work-experience programs that allow students to apply school learning in a workplace setting and to gain new skills related to their academic or career majors. Work-Based Learning also exposes students to the culture of work and helps students internalize workplace expectations, attitudes, and responsibilities. Connecting Activities are programmatic or human resources that help link School- and Work-Based Learning.

School-to-Work systems are created by partnerships among state and local education, employment, and community stakeholders who join together to create and support a seamless pathway from school to work.

Value Added by Bilingual Students

Bilingual students bring remarkable strengths to STW programs. These students, of course, speak more than one language and understand more than one social system and culture. Some bilingual students have well-developed abilities to adapt to new situations and cope with change. Many immigrant and refugee students demonstrate a strong work ethic in the way they handle school and family responsibilities as well as part-time work. These talents and values help bilingual students contribute to the development and success of work teams. Furthermore, all students gain experience working in a diverse setting typical of the workplace of the future.

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ESL Methods and the Employment Connection

School-to-Work, Tech Prep, and federal funding initiatives for adult education/ESL are causing educators to rethink their roles in preparing students for employment. School-to-Work (STW) and Tech Prep programs forge new relationships between academic learning, work-based learning, and career preparation for students in high school and early postsecondary training. Federal initiatives for adult education/ESL tie funding to employment-oriented, performance-based outcomes.

Although most ESL educators recognize the need for a stronger and more overt connection between ESL and employment, many questions are being raised about possible implications. What kinds of skills should ESL programs emphasize? How can ESL classes meet the diverse needs of their learners? Will ESL teachers need to completely change their curricula and methods? What about learners in adult ESL classes who are not preparing for employment?

This article addresses these questions, drawing from presentations by Barbara Birch, California State University (Fresno) and JoAnn (Jodi) Crandall, University of Maryland Baltimore County at the recent ESL and the Employment Connection Mini-Conference co-hosted by the Fresno County Refugee Education Task Force and the Saroyan chapter of CATESOL.

SCANS Skills

The SCANS framework is a model for teachers in STW, adult ESL, or workplace ESL programs to use in making their existing ESL curricula more employment-related. The SCANS (Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills) Report, *What Work Requires of Schools*, identifies three Foundation Skills and five Competencies needed for solid job performance (see the table on page 3).

The SCANS framework can be used by ESL teachers to select skills and competencies to teach in their lessons, and to identify the language required to carry out these skills and competencies in the workplace. For example, ESL classes often begin with activities that encourage learners to get to know each other. The teacher can use this opportunity to teach the information competency. Learners can gather information about each other using a survey, and organize and communicate their findings in a written summary. Language skills integral to this activity include asking questions, stating numbers and arithmetic functions, and summarizing factual information in written form. Although the teacher has taught workplace skills (and should document this in her lesson plan and make these skills explicit to the students), she has done so in a way that does not compromise language learning or unnecessarily narrow the curriculum.

ESL Methods

Some ESL teachers may be concerned that the goal of employment preparation will undermine the positive affect and spirit of cooperation in their classrooms. On the contrary, Barbara Birch believes that learner-centered classrooms characterized by sound ESL instructional practices are not just effective language learning environments, but they also successfully prepare learners for the workplace by implicitly teaching many of the SCANS skills. For example, cooperative learning activities teach interpersonal skills such as working in teams, teaching others, and negotiating. Problem-posing activities teach thinking skills as well as information and systems management competencies. (See Examples of ESL Methods on page 3.)

Birch challenges ESL educators to identify and document other specific ways that ESL methods teach the workplace skills and competencies defined by SCANS. She points out that it is important for educators to recognize that while an obvious employment connection can be made by using work-related content material, it is the instructional methods used by the teacher and learners that get to the heart of workplace readiness and "know-how." In other words, "how" tasks are performed and language is used is often as important or more important than "what" the specific language or content of the task is.

In summary, much of what ESL instructors already do has direct relevance to employment preparation and should be main-

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*(**ESL Methods** from previous page)*

tained and enhanced. Secondly, examination of the SCANS framework illustrates that many of the complex "human ability" skills required of today's workers mirror the skills that affective/humanistic, learner-centered instructional approaches seek to develop in learners.

Beyond Entry-Level Jobs

Because ESL programs will be held accountable for employment-related outcomes, one of the major challenges facing them is the question of what kind of employment students should be prepared for. This situation raises a concern similar to that expressed by Elsa Auerbach and others in the mid 1980s: that a "survival" ESL curriculum may prepare learners for subservient social roles.

Jodi Crandall urges ESL educators to resist pressure to focus employment preparation on entry-level positions. Adequate workforce preparation must involve orienting learners toward the development of long-term self-sufficiency and capacity for lifelong learning. Though entry-level positions may be a realistic starting point for many ESL learners, learners can be directed to educational opportunities for upgrading their skills once they are employed and have left the ESL classroom. Use of the SCANS framework and learner-centered methodologies will assist learners in developing the personal skills and information and systems management competencies required for self-direction toward long-term self-sufficiency.

Survival ESL

What about learners who come to the ESL classroom with goals that are not employment-related? How can teachers accommodate their needs while responding to programmatic demands for a more explicit employment focus? Again, the SCANS framework suggests some answers.

SCANS foundation skills and competencies are also needed in many non-employment situations. For example, resource management calls for organizing, planning, and allocating time and money. While clearly applicable to employment preparation, these skills are also relevant to household budgeting and management, family organization, and coordination of transportation for family needs. Showing how skills and language transfer from one situation to another is good instructional practice and allows teachers to meet the diverse goals of learners.

An examination of the SCANS framework should reassure educators who fear the implications of a strengthened employment connection in ESL. Program design that is guided by this framework will result in the maintenance of sound ESL instructional practices and programs with strong and realistic connections to all aspects of learners' lives.

Brigitte Mingkwan is a Program Specialist for GAIN in the Fresno County Office of Education and the Chair of the California Refugee English Language Training Task Force. She can be reached at 11 South Teilman, Fresno, CA 93706; 209-488-7579.

For more information on SCANS: Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills. (1991). *What Work Requires of Schools: A SCANS Report for America 2000.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Labor. (EDRS No. ED 332 054) ~

SCANS SKILLS

FOUNDATION SKILLS

Basic Skills—reading, writing, quantitative operations, active listening, oral communication, interpreting, organizing information and ideas

Thinking Skills—ability to learn and reason, think creatively, make decisions, solve problems

Personal Qualities—responsibility, self-esteem, sociability, self-management, integrity, honesty

WORKPLACE COMPETENCIES

Resource Management—organizing; planning; allocating time, money, materials, staff

Interpersonal Skills—working on teams, teaching others, serving customers, leading, negotiating, working effectively within culturally diverse settings

Information Management—acquiring and evaluating facts and data, organizing and maintaining such information, interpreting and communicating the information, using computers

Systems Management—understanding social organization and technological systems, monitoring and correcting performance, improving existing systems, designing new systems

Technology—selecting equipment and tools for the task at hand, applying technology to tasks, maintaining and trouble-shooting equipment

EXAMPLES OF ESL METHODS

Content-based instruction
Learner-centered organization
Cross-cultural activities
Affective–humanistic activities
Cooperative learning
Problem-posing
Decision-making by consensus

STW / Vocational Resources

• **The National School to Work Learning and Information Center**, 400 Virginia Avenue SW, Room 210, Washington, DC 20024; 800-251-7236; E-mail: stw-lc@ed.gov.

Operating under the School-to-Work Opportunities Act, the Center offers six services: a resource bank of select technical assistance providers; an 800-number "Answer Line"; an internet home page/information network (http://www.stw.ed.gov); databases on key STW contacts, organizations, and practices; relevant publications; and meetings, conferences, and training sessions.

• ***School-to-Work Transition: Trends and Issue Alerts***, by Susan Imel. (1995). Columbus, OH: ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education. (EDRS No. ED 378 350)

This two-page document includes a brief introduction to STW and listings of print resources and resource organizations.

• **School to Work in Community Colleges**. In *Information Bulletin* (Spring 1996). Los Angeles, CA: ERIC Clearinghouse for Community Colleges.

This three-page annotated bibliography of documents in the ERIC database is included in *Information Bulletin* and is available from: ERIC Clearinghouse for Community Colleges at 800-832-8256; E-mail: eeh3usc@mvs.oac.ucla.edu.

• ***Vocational English-as-a-Second-Language Programs***, by Keith Buchanan. (1990). Washington, DC: ERIC Clearinghouse on Languages and Linguistics. (EDRS No. ED 321 551)

This ERIC digest defines VESL, describes several program models, identifies factors required for successful programs, and lists suggestions for further reading.

• ***Phi Delta Kappan***, *7*(8). (April 1996). Bloomington, IN: Phi Delta Kappan International, Inc.

This issue focuses on school-to-work, vocational education, and related educational initiatives. Articles include *The New Vocationalism*; *Revitalizing High Schools: What the School-to-Career Movement Can Contribute*; and *School-to-Work: A Model for Learning a Living*.

• ***Community Colleges as Facilitators of School-to-Work***, by Frankie Santos Laanan. (1995). Los Angeles, CA: ERIC Clearinghouse for Community Colleges. (EDRS No. ED 383 360)

This ERIC digest discusses three ways in which community colleges facilitate effective school-to-work systems.

Documents with ED numbers are available from the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS) at 1-800-443-ERIC. ~

ESL Homeownership Materials

The Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL), under a contract with the Federal National Mortgage Association (Fannie Mae), has developed a curriculum module to make homeownership information accessible to adults with limited English proficiency. The student module and teacher's guide, entitled *How to Buy a Home in the United States*, provide learners with essential information about buying and owning homes while strengthening their English language skills. This module can be used as a supplement to regular ESL instructional materials.

Topics covered include determining readiness to buy a home, looking for a home using real estate ads and agents, exploring local homeownership resources, and budgeting for a mortgage. Communication and literacy skills such as reading newspaper advertisements, exploring resources through telephone calls and letters, and solving math problems are also addressed.

The module and guide are now available free of charge through Fannie Mae's New Americans Initiative, P.O. Box 65707, Salt Lake City, UT 84165-9989; 800-544-9224. Over the coming year, CAL will assist Fannie Mae in disseminating information about the materials to adult ESL programs across the country. For more information, contact Toya Lynch at CAL at 202-429-9292 or Kate Fralin at Fannie Mae at 202-752-6702. ~

Multimedia Health Care Materials

CareerQs™ is a multimedia curriculum package designed for secondary school students to improve English communication skills and develop an understanding of the American world of work. One teacher commented, "I really liked using this material. After going through unit one, my kids now know why they are coming to school."

The curriculum package for health care occupations centers around a dramatic video story that contrasts the teenager Maria's bright future with her traumatic bicycle accident. As the story unfolds, the video introduces a wide variety of health care workers who help Maria recover from her injury. Following a segment of the video, students choose a worker to study in more depth using video, CD-ROM, and print materials. For example, students note worker actions, and tools and skills used on the job; and they explore what each worker likes about his/her job, the job duties, and the training required. The CD-ROM and print materials (at three levels of English proficiency) both reinforce and extend learning experiences beyond the video. Nearly fifty different health care occupations, including admissions clerk, paramedic, social worker, physician, and radiology technician, are covered.

The health care occupations package is available now ($429 for videos, CD-ROM, and Lab Guide; $599 for package plus ESL print materials). Packages for hospitality and business are under development. CareerQs™ is funded by the Annenberg Foundation. Contact Dr. Jeffrey A. Harris, Assistant Director, Vocational Research Institute, 1528 Walnut Street, Suite 1502, Philadelphia, PA 19102; 800-874-5387. ~

School to Work (from page 1)

Factors Influencing Success of Bilingual Students

Certain factors influence the success of both bilingual and monolingual students: high expectations, appropriate support, positive attitudes toward their language and culture, access to a comprehensive curriculum, and consistent monitoring of academic progress. But, because of the unique needs of bilingual students, two additional factors are critical to their success: providing access to bilingual academic instruction and understanding bilingual students (including those proficient in English) as individuals who are shaped by a bilingual/multicultural context. A 1991 Education Development Center, Inc. study found that the following components also contribute to a successful bilingual vocational program: student support from a bilingual liaison staff member, small learning groups, programmatic flexibility, attention to students' needs, and focused instruction that links academic, occupational, and career development.

Challenge Questions for Designers of STW Systems

Answering these questions will help STW system and program designers provide equal opportunity for bilingual populations:

• To what extent are bilingual populations represented on STW curriculum committees, design teams, steering committees, and policymaking groups?

• Are STW designers familiar with the research on factors influencing bilingual student success?

• In what ways does the program help policymakers understand the contributions of bilingual students and the value they add to STW?

• Are STW and student achievement data disaggregated to answer these questions?

- Are bilingual students participating in STW? In what ways?
- Are bilingual students represented in adequate numbers in high skill/high wage school-based and work-based learning opportunities? Or are they clustered in low skill/low wage programs?
- Are bilingual students achieving as well as their monolingual peers? If not, what support structures can be put into place?

• What portion of the STW budget is allocated to support bilingual students in STW?

• What safeguards are built into the STW system design to ensure that bilingual students can pass through gatekeeping structures (e.g., opportunities to demonstrate skills in varied styles/modalities or languages; accessibility to bilingual counselors)?

• What supports are built into the system to meet the unique needs of bilingual students (e.g., bilingual/language-sensitive academic instruction; ESL preparation and support for work-based experience; student/peer support groups)?

• In what ways does the program support workplace mentors, employers, and STW coordinators to help them ensure that bilingual students succeed in work-based learning?

Challenge Questions for Advocates for Bilingual Populations

• Are you aware of STW initiatives in your state, region, and local community? Are federal STW dollars being spent in your community? If so, what is being funded?

• What are you doing to ensure representation of bilingual educators, employers, community members, and students in the STW system?

EDC Activities

Over the next several months, Education Development Center (EDC), Inc. (a non-profit organization) and Boston University School of Education will collaborate on a guidebook for STW system designers entitled *School-to-Work and its Implications for Bilingual Education.* Together, they will also host a forum for policymakers, educators, and trainers in STW and bilingual education to think through issues and make recommendations for policy and implementation strategies that ensure that STW meets the needs of bilingual students.

EDC also hosts the School-to-Work Network (STWNet), an internet discussion forum for all topics related to school-to-work, including STW for bilingual and ESL students. To subscribe, send an e-mail message to: *majordomo@tristram.edc.org* that says: *subscribe stwnet* in the body of the message.

For more information about EDC's work, to share information on promising programs or successful practices, or to become more involved in the national conversation on STW for bilingual students, contact: Joyce Malyn-Smith, Senior Project Director, Education Development Center, Inc., 55 Chapel Street, Newton, MA 02158-1060; 617-969-7100, ext. 2386; E-mail: joycem@edc.org. Visit EDC's homepage at *http://www.edc.org.* For specific information on STW, go to *http://www.edc.org/CEEC/home/stwrfi.html.*

This article was prepared by Joyce Malyn-Smith, Ed.D., Education Development Center, Inc. and Maria Estela Brisk, Ph.D., Boston University, School of Education. ~

1996 PAIE Grant Applications

The Project in Adult Immigrant Education (PAIE) at CAL will award five new grants in the fall of 1996. Awards will be made to programs that offer workplace ESL and skills training, vocational ESL, and/or applied math and science ESL, and that (a) have identified a common problem or issue in this field and will use the award to develop and implement an approach to its resolution and to document that experience for dissemination or (b) have developed and implemented a successful approach to resolve a common problem or issue in this field and will use the award to refine and/or document that approach. Grants consist of a $5,000 cash award, on-site consultant services, and help with documentation and dissemination. Prospective applicants should request an RFP from Allene Grognet, PAIE Project Director, CAL Sunbelt, 7085A South Tamiami Trail, Sarasota, FL 34231; 941-921-2183; E-mail: allene@cal.org. Completed applications must be received by September 30, 1996.

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PAIE
Project in Adult Immigrant Education

CAL
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The Connector

Forging Links Between Language and Employment Skills for Adult Immigrants

This issue of *The Connector* focuses on identifying the impact of workplace education programs. The lead article explains the business term *return on investment* and suggests ways that ESL programs can provide evaluation data that are more meaningful to businesses. The second article reminds us that there are many perspectives—company, employee, union, educator—from which workplace education programs can be viewed and that meaningful information is different for each of these groups. A third article describes a literacy audit process that customizes each workplace program to provide the results that both employers and employees want.

Measuring Productivity Gains From Workplace ESL Programs

When teachers evaluate a class, they usually consider two questions: 1) Did the participants enjoy the class? and 2) Did they learn something? To answer the first question, teachers may rely on end-of-class questionnaires, class attendance, and class participation. To answer the second, they use observation and conduct various kinds of tests.

To the company sponsoring the instruction, however, the value of a class is often determined by its *return on investment*, or ROI. In other words, based on the amount of money the corporation has spent, does it see a measurable return, translated into dollars? This return may be measured by decreases in errors, production time, accidents, absenteeism, employee turnover, or scrap; or by increases in rooms filled (for hotels), customer satisfaction, or forms processed. These data are then converted into dollars and compared to the cost of the program.

Unfortunately, for several reasons, it is difficult to measure ROI for an ESL training program: 1) Training may be conducted for only a small percentage of the workers, so the impact of the training may not show on data collected for an entire workforce or division; 2) Many programs are too short to affect any change or "show a return"; 3) It may be difficult to get pre- and post-data from the company or the company may not keep data in an easily useable form; and 4) Most importantly, even if the data have been obtained, it is difficult to isolate the effects of ESL training and proclaim that the decrease or increase is a result of the training. As a result, there are no published studies showing ROI for ESL training. Even evaluations of federal workplace literacy programs that offered ESL provide statistics based mostly on broad observations by supervisors, self-evaluation by participants, and anecdotal evidence of gains.

Another issue is that the *purpose* of the class may only indirectly lead to a clear ROI for the company. Many corporate ESL classes in manufacturing focus on team participation, pronunciation improvement, and other communication skills. When similar communication training is given to native speakers, no ROI is required. However, such training often lasts about 16 hours, while a typical ESL program lasts 48 to 100 hours or more. As a result, more gains may be expected of an ESL program and more proof of its value.

Types of Data

So, how can an ESL provider measure productivity gains for a company? There are a variety of methods, that, while not completely adequate for a manufacturing manager concerned mainly with the bottom line, do provide some satisfaction. An ESL program can collect data such as the following:

1. improvements in test scores in the company's job or technical training courses;
2. reduction in the amount of time it takes managers to edit employees' writing (actually provides some ROI data if sufficiently documented and quantified);
3. percentage of managers who think the training was a worthwhile investment of department dollars and employee time; and
4. percentage of course participants who:
   - go on to other educational endeavors (e.g., GED programs, community college, adult education),
   - exhibit increased initiative,
   - are assigned additional job responsibilities,
   - volunteer to be cross-trained on a new job,
   - increase participation in company meetings,
   - exhibit increased self-confidence,
   - contribute to an increase in company morale,
   - read the procedures to answer a question instead of asking the supervisor,
   - increase their use of English on the job,

(continued on page 2)

*(**Measuring Productivity Gains** from previous page)*

- increase their ability to follow a supervisor's spoken or written instructions correctly or to indicate lack of understanding when necessary,
- speak more clearly about problems and their possible causes, and
- improve in specific areas taught in the ESL program (e.g., pronunciation, writing, making presentations).

Results

Most of these data (except test scores) can be collected through pre- and post-checklists or interviews. When turned into graphs, these data help company representatives understand the impact of the dollars they spent. For example, LinguaTec, Inc. sent questionnaires to managers and supervisors following various training programs and received the following kinds of feedback: 60% of the participants received an increase in job responsibilities at least partially as a result of the training; 100% of the managers thought the training was a worthwhile investment of department dollars and employee time; 22% of the employees began speaking English in the work area; and 15% of the employees began initiating conversations with supervisors regarding work.

Data can also be collected on the percentage of managers or supervisors who have observed improvements in such areas as productivity and in the use of English on the floor. While these topics are broad and the feedback in some cases subjective, the points can be supported by anecdotal evidence. For example, one report evaluating ten workplace literacy programs in Chicago noted that supervisors made such statements as: "raising levels of effective communication is reducing the amount of scrap" and "there is more accuracy in reporting."

Other anecdotes may also provide evidence of gains. Supervisors may observe greater adherence to safety rules and safety signs. If quantified, this can be compared to the cost of accidents or OSHA fines when these rules are not followed. Supervisors may also comment on greater accuracy in passing information from one shift to another, more effective communication with supervisors and within teams, and fewer conflicts among workers. Although these improvements are not easily identified, quantified, and analyzed, they ultimately save time for the company.

A report to a company that shows these types of gains can be accompanied by test data from the ESL class. Together, this documentation can validate a corporation's investment in ESL training.

P. Faith Hayflich is President of LinguaTec, Inc., a company that has been providing workplace language training since 1980. She can be reached at LinguaTec@aol.com or at 408-746-3901.

Program Evaluation: Multiple Perspectives

The Casco Bay Partnership for Workplace Education, a project funded by the National Workplace Literacy Program of the U.S. Department of Education, provides customized ESL and basic skills instruction at seven business sites in Southern Maine. Evaluation is a key component of project operations—one that is discussed, "re-engineered," and experimented with on an ongoing basis. This article describes the Partnership's evaluation process.

The Casco Bay Partnership's evaluation design is grounded in its recognition that there are multiple stakeholders in workplace instructional programs—educators, program participants, business and union representatives, and funders. The kinds of information needed by each may be quite different. For example, site-based advisory groups made up of selected participants, frontline supervisors, upper management, and union representatives, want feedback on program delivery (recruitment, enrollments, completions, and other indicators of program effectiveness); teachers and participants want to track the progress of individual learners; middle management and human resources/training managers are looking for specific workplace outcomes (e.g., promotions or safety); unions want to see the program impact on job security and the development of portable competencies; and top management, program administrators, funding agencies, the public sector, and universities need information on program activities, outcomes, and impacts.

A Tool for Learning

How can a project manage such a kaleidoscope of interests? The Casco Bay Partnership organizes its evaluation activities around a key question: How can evaluation become a tool for learning for each part of the system? With this challenge, the goal is to develop evaluation procedures that place the responsibility and accountability for demonstrating and documenting outcomes with the various stakeholders. External (partnership-level) evaluators provide the programwide conceptual framework and tools for managing the data. Here is an overview:

The Casco Bay Partnership uses a customized database to produce summary reports on numbers and types of courses offered as well as participant data such as demographic profiles, prior coursework, and enrollments/completions. Because several sites have found it important to know which shifts and job positions may be over- or under-represented in the learner population, these items are included on an intake form that is given to each participant.

Then the real work begins: identifying learning outcomes. Learning outcomes in workplace education occur at three levels:

(continued on next page)

(Program Evaluation from previous page)

1) learning during training, 2) on-the-job application of what has been learned, and 3) impact on the organization. Partnership sites measure individual learning outcomes of training in a host of ways: pre- and post-testing, portfolios, self-assessments, surveys, interviews, instructors' documentation of progress, and entry into higher education or GED study. A project team is currently preparing to field test a conceptual framework for summarizing this quantitative and qualitative information across curricular areas, classrooms, and sites.

Partnership sites also track different on-the-job applications of learning. Common indicators include promotions, retention, safety data, and entry into and success in pay-for-skills and other training events. While these are useful data, it is frequently difficult to establish a clear correlation between these indicators and the workplace education program due to concurrent changes in production, employment levels, or the market. A further difficulty in identifying on-the-job outcomes is determining how to organize and report anecdotal evidence such as the comments of participants, co-workers, managers, and others indicating improvements in cross-cultural communication, helpfulness, initiative, morale, and motivation. The Partnership is exploring the use of case studies, focused interviews, and the development of workplace education portfolios as ways to capture evidence of workplace improvements.

Learning also impacts entire companies. In the Casco Bay Partnership, the impact is visible in such areas as the company being recognized as an employer of choice in the community, a shift in corporate self-image to that of a "learning culture," increased corporate involvement with higher education, and greater company recognition of employee educational achievements.

In all of these evaluation efforts, the Partnership seeks efficiency, effectiveness, and integrity. Currently, the project is examining evaluation activities to consolidate and update existing materials and procedures, streamline processes, and make multiple use of documents and information.

Recommendations

For others engaged in workplace education program evaluation, the Casco Bay Partnership offers the following recommendations:

1. The data collection and evaluation design needs to be built in at the *beginning* of a project. Often there is pressure for rapid start-up with emphasis on delivery of services, rather than allowing time for development of a conceptual framework for tracking progress and outcomes. This can result in a superimposed, after-the-fact report that gives a narrow view of a program.

2. The data collection and evaluation system need to be *integrated* into project activities. Providers of information need to know who will be using the data and for what purposes; regular interaction between data providers and data users will improve the methods and accuracy of the system. When participants are the data providers, the act of providing information can also be an opportunity for learning and reflection.

3. Data collection methods and measures can *vary across sites* as long as the purpose and content of the information is clear. A single, ubiquitous form is not necessarily the best approach: Group interviews, portfolios, or classroom activities may capture program outcomes more accurately.

4. The evaluation design needs to *change and grow* with the project and with the company sites involved. Each company and its advisory group generate a report on their activities using a consistent framework provided by the Partnership. The report is useful to the site, and it is relatively easy for the project to summarize activities across all sites by compiling the individual reports.

In summary, the Casco Bay Partnership for Workplace Education believes that the story of a complex learning system must be told from multiple perspectives. With care, these perspectives can be joined together to form a mosaic that describes many levels of learning outcomes.

Nancy Martz is Project Director of the Casco Bay Partnership for Workplace Education at the University of Southern Maine. She can be reached at 220 Bailey Hall, USM, Gorham, ME 04038; 207-780-5014.

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PAIE and NCLE Resources

The Project in Adult Immigrant Education (PAIE) and the National Clearinghouse for ESL Literacy Education (NCLE) are both housed at the Center for Applied Linguistics, work closely together, and have co-published many of the following free publications. To order copies, contact PAIE/NCLE at 1118 22nd St, NW, Washington, DC 20037; 202-429-9292; ncle@cal.org.

Evaluating Workplace ESL Instructional Programs, by Miriam Burt (1995).

This digest discusses issues associated with workplace ESL program evaluation and describes evaluation measures and activities.

Selling Workplace ESL Instructional Programs, by Miriam Burt (1995).

This digest explores why companies do and do not provide workplace basic skills and ESL instruction, and provides suggestions for marketing programs to employers.

Union-Sponsored Workplace ESL Instruction, by Susan Rosenblum (1996).

This digest explores the history of union-sponsored workplace ESL instruction, discusses models for program delivery, and describes curricula and program goals.

Assessing Workplace Performance Problems: A Checklist, by Kay Westerfield and Miriam Burt (1996).

This digest provides a framework for assessing worker performance problems and shows educators how to use it in determining what services to provide.

Planning, Implementing, and Evaluating Workplace ESL Programs, by Allene Guss Grognet (1996).

This 4-page Q&A discusses and provides frameworks for the components necessary to any employment-related ESL program—needs analysis, curriculum development, planning instruction, instructional strategies, and program evaluation.

PAIE, funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, focuses specifically on language and employment training for adult immigrants. Visit PAIE's web page at http://www.cal.org/CAL/HTML/mellon.htm.

NCLE, an adjunct ERIC clearinghouse, focuses on adult ESL literacy education, including family ESL literacy, working with volunteers, and ESL assessment. A complete publications list, 41 full-text NCLE/ERIC digests (including many of those co-published with PAIE), information about the NIFL-ESL listserv, and a link to the ERIC system are now available electronically on NCLE's web page at http://www.cal.org/CAL/HTML/ncle.htm.

ERIC Resources

The following documents may be located in a library ERIC collection or purchased from the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS) at 1-800-443-3742.

[Kirby, M.] (1989). *Perspectives on organizing a workplace literacy program.* Arlington, VA: Arlington Education and Employment Program (REEP), Arlington Public Schools. (EDRS No. ED 313 927)

Mikulecky, L., & Lloyd, P. (1994). *Handbook of ideas for evaluating workplace literacy programs.* Bloomington, IN: Indiana University. (EDRS No. ED 375 264)

Mrowicki, L., & Conrath, J. (1994). *Evaluation guide for basic skills programs.* Des Plaines, IL: Workplace Education Division, The Center—Resources for Education. (EDRS No. ED 373 261)

Refugees and Jobs Report Released

A report summarizing how-to tips on finding jobs for refugees has just been released by SEARAC, the Southeast Asia Resource Action Center in Washington, DC.

Entitled *Refugees and Jobs*, the report summarizes the findings from more than 100 workshops included in a series of three conferences sponsored last year by the Office of Refugee Resettlement. The conferences were held in Arlington (Virginia), Los Angeles, and Chicago, and were attended by more than 600 people working in the field.

The report can be used as a reference work or as a training manual for people new to the refugee employment field. It has sections specifically devoted to such subjects as job development, employment counseling for refugees, and management issues. Among the subjects covered in detail are how to raise (non-ORR) funds for employment programs; working with employers in the private and public sectors; the use of volunteers in employment programs; and how to encourage refugees who think (sometimes, as early as age 50) that they are too old to work.

ORR is sending copies of the report to people who participated in the conferences and to state refugee program coordinators. Others may send a self-addressed 9" x 12" envelope with $1.93 in postage stamps to SEARAC, 1628 Sixteenth Street NW, Washington, DC 20009-3099; Attn: Jobs Conference Report.

Step One in Curriculum Development: The Literacy Audit

Valley Regional Adult Education (VRAE) in Shelton, Connecticut, has provided customized workplace ESL and basic skills instructional programs for the past 13 years. VRAE identifies critical job tasks, conducts analyses to determine how competent workers use literacy skill applications in their jobs, develops customized curricula to match workers' needs, and evaluates program benefits.

The *literacy audit* is the primary tool used by VRAE's workplace team to design and develop a customized workplace curriculum. This process uses a combination of Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS) and VRAE-developed tools. The CASAS Workforce Learning System provides tools to help organize and document initial company findings as well as tools to identify language and basic skills required for job performance.

During the audit, a trained team of 3-5 educators gathers information on workers' educational needs and the company's needs and goals through observations, interviews, and job tasks and materials analyses. The resulting information is used to customize each workplace program; for example, instructors integrate the teaching of language and basic skills with specific job task requirements using actual job task materials.

Before the audit process begins, however, VRAE makes an initial visit to the company that includes a tour of the worksite. From this initial visit, VRAE develops a Partnerships for Progress Proposal, a document that describes company needs and outlines services to be provided and project costs for the company.

After the initial visit and tour, if the company accepts VRAE's proposal, the first step of the literacy audit is interviewing the on-line supervisors and/or foremen. The interview provides specific job descriptions, forms and/or dockets used, and a preliminary knowledge of the skills required. The auditors also request input in helping to identify students and their specific problems in oral communication, written communication, or calculations.

The second step is interviewing employees to identify and assess their stated and observed needs. The VRAE workplace team has found that the most efficient way to do this is for individual team members to approach workers on a one-to-one basis. This approach requires less time and offers workers the opportunity to discuss their literacy skill needs in confidence. A notepad and clipboard facilitate the auditors' notetaking which should be brief in the presence of workers.

The employee interview begins with the auditor (the workplace team member) introducing herself and briefly explaining that the company is starting a workplace instructional program. As part of the planning, the auditor explains that she would like to learn about the products and production line process.

The auditor then asks the worker to explain how he would teach his job to a new worker. This allows the employee to explain his job in his own terms, and gives the auditor the opportunity to identify required literacy skills and possible deficiencies. At this point, the employee may tell the auditor that he has certain problems in performing job tasks, e.g., filling out forms or finding pertinent information in a manual. And, the ESL worker's problems in communication can be observed during the interview.

The third step in the process is identifying workplace terminology. One team member is given the responsibility to collect and categorize workplace-specific terminology data such as verbs, acronyms, and idiomatic speech used in written or oral workplace communication.

The resulting, customized curriculum is a synthesis of management goals and company needs identified through the literacy audit, needs assessment, job task analysis, job materials analysis, employee interviews, auditors' observations, and the plant tour.

Lee Wolf is Program Facilitator for Valley Regional Adult Education. She can be reached at VRAE Adult Learning Center, 415 Howe Avenue, Shelton, CT 06484; 203-924-6651.

For more information on CASAS Workforce Learning Systems, contact CASAS (Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System), 8910 Claremont Mesa Boulevard, San Diego, CA 92123; 619-292-2900.

Join the WorkWorld Resources Network!

The WorkWorld Resources Network connects you with workplace and vocational ESL specialists and contacts, programs and program models, and information about documents and materials useful to workplace and vocational language trainers, educators, and program administrators. This information will soon be accessible on the World Wide Web from the Center for Applied Linguistic's homepage at http://www.cal.org.

Please join the network! Make your experience and expertise accessible. Let others know about the program you are involved in, or the curricula or teaching materials that you have developed. Please contact us by mail, telephone, or e-mail for a short questionnaire, and we will make sure that you are included! Contact Lucinda Branaman at CAL, 1118 22nd Street, NW, Washington, DC 20037; 202-429-9292; lucinda@cal.org.

1996 PAIE Grant Applications Due Soon!

The Project in Adult Immigrant Education (PAIE) at CAL will award five new grants in the fall of 1996. Awards will be made to programs that offer workplace ESL and skills training, vocational ESL, and/or applied math and science ESL, and that (a) have identified a common problem or issue in this field and will use the award to develop and implement an approach to its resolution and to document that experience for dissemination or (b) have developed and implemented a successful approach to resolve a common problem or issue in this field and will use the award to refine and/or document that approach. Grants consist of a $5,000 cash award, on-site consultant services, and help with documentation and dissemination. Prospective applicants should request an RFP from Allene Grognet, PAIE Project Director, CAL Sunbelt, 7085A South Tamiami Trail, Sarasota, FL 34231; 941-921-2183; E-mail: allene@cal.org. Completed applications must be received by September 30, 1996.

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The Connector

Forging Links Between Language and Employment Skills for Adult Immigrants

This issue of *The Connector* focuses on the classroom and how to make instruction more authentic and relevant to the workplace. The program profile describes the Worker Education Program of the Chicago Teachers' Center, a program that uses holistic instructional methods, workplace materials, and broad-based participation by all stakeholders to ensure that it is worker-centered. The article on contact assignments shows how teachers can help learners transfer the skills they learn in class into the workplace. Another article describes how to incorporate the SCANS skills into instruction. The 1996 PAIE Technical Assistance Awards are also announced.

Program Profile: A Worker-Centered Education Program

The Worker Education Program is sponsored by the Chicago Teachers' Center, an academic unit of the College of Education of Northeastern Illinois University. This demonstration program has been funded since 1992 by a series of grants from the National Workplace Literacy Program of the U.S. Department of Education.

The program has partnered with the Union of Needletrades, Industrial, and Textile Employees (UNITE) and 10 companies in three states—Illinois, Kentucky, and Ohio—providing over 2,000 adult union members with job-specific basic skills classes in English as a Second Language, Reading and Writing, Math, GED Preparation, Literacy, and Communications, Teamwork, and Problem-Solving Skills for the Workplace.

The participating businesses are primarily light manufacturers who produce a wide variety of products including track lighting, plastic-injected mold hose reels, sports lockers, shirts and ties, silk-screened tee shirts, crepe paper, medical products, and men's suits. Other participating businesses include a full service bank and a community health clinic.

Program participants are mostly limited English proficient adults from Mexico and other Latin American countries, Vietnam, Korea, and Eastern European countries. The program also serves a great number of native-born Americans including African-Americans, Appalachians, and others. Many participants have had little formal education in their native countries and are non-literate. Most of the immigrant workers have not completed high school. The American-born workers, for the most part, have completed high school, but have not participated in education or training since. The majority of participants in the program are women, and the average age of participants is 35 years old.

In the Worker Education Program, all the stakeholders—workers, businesses, union, and the university—have achieved positive outcomes. Workers' attendance in the program has resulted in enhanced oral and written communications, higher self-esteem, and more opportunities for job advancement. Businesses have gained a competitive edge through better communication with their work force, increased on-line production, and decreased product-turnaround time. The union describes better opportunities for their rank and file members as well as more active union membership. The university benefits from the development of an innovative and interactive educational program with far-reaching ripple effects to the community-at-large. Finally, workers report that their increased skills have helped them in their roles as parents, consumers, union members, and citizens. (See box entitled *Four Levels of Program Outcomes* for more details.)

Exemplary program characteristics include a philosophy of helping learners acquire global skills for the workplace and for life using a variety of learner-centered, holistic educational methodologies; an extensive staff development plan; a comprehensive qualitative and quantitative evaluation process conducted by an external evaluator; and an active advisory board where all stakeholders jointly participate in program planning from recruitment to task analysis to recognition activities.

The program's adult education facilitators engage in reflection and evaluation of teaching practices on a regular basis through monthly meetings and workshops, observation sessions with coordinators and peers, and regular attendence at workplace and ESL workshops. Topics at the monthly meetings have included Adapting Authentic Materials for the Workplace; the Language Experience Approach; Teaching Grammar Inductively; Objectives, Testing and Documenting Student Progress; Less Teacher Talk in the ESL Classroom; and Assessment and Evaluation. Furthermore, educators participate in an extensive pre-training which involves plant tours and collaboration in task analysis and curriculum development.

The Worker Education Program incorporates a learner-centered educational approach. Central to this approach is the active

(continued on next page)

Program Profile (from page one)

participation of workers in all aspects of the program, enabling them to enhance workplace competencies, participate more fully in their workplaces, set goals for themselves, and track their own progress. (See box entitled *Worker-Centered Teaching Tips to Maximize Student Input.*) Five themes that are common in the program's instruction are work issues, communication in the workplace, quality control, work forms, and health and safety. The program uses educational methods that complement the learner-centered approach including Problem-posing, Language Experience Approach, and Total Physical Response. All four language skills—reading, writing, listening, and speaking—are combined and used in meaningful contexts, creating a holistic curriculum.

The educators use an eclectic teaching methodology to ensure that learners with different learning styles benefit from instruction and improve their skills. In the classes, educators utilize workplace-specific language and situations and employ a variety of techniques including role play, realia, pair work, and cooperative learning, to appeal to visual, aural, and kinesthetic learners. In this way, language, math, and literacy are integrated into the lives and work of the learners.

As we approach the 21st century, education will be the key to societal, economic, and personal development in the global marketplace. Worker-centered programs such as Northeastern Illinois University's Worker Education Program are essential to enable workers to enhance their skills for the workplace and for life.

Four Levels of Program Outcomes of the Worker Education Program

Worker Outcomes

Enhanced many workers' English and communication skills
Increased workers' opportunities for promotion and advancement in some companies
Increased many workers' levels of self-confidence
Increased workers' participation in union-related activities
Enhanced workers' job performance

Company Outcomes

Enhanced communication with many workers and the union
Promoted some workers from within company ranks
Increased on-line production at some companies
Enhanced quality control measures at some companies

Union Outcomes

Enhanced English communications with union members
Gained many more active union members
Increased number of members using union services
Enhanced communication with management of the companies

University Outcomes

Reached out to non-traditional adult student population
Collaborated with labor union and area businesses
Engendered innovative learner-centered educational methodology
Provided educational services to parents of many children enrolled in Chicago Public Schools

Worker-Centered Teaching Tips to Maximize Student Input

- *Use class activities which minimize teacher talk such as:*
  pairwork *dialogues and roleplays*
  cooperative learning *small group work*
  problem-posing *language experience approach*
- *Pause five seconds to let students answer questions before jumping in with the answer yourself.*
- *When appropriate, encourage students to try to correct their own and other students' errors, both oral and written, before giving the correct answer yourself.*
- *Let students lead activities as much as possible by having them ask the questions, call on others to answer, write the answers on the board, and lead class discussions.*
- *Have students gradually take more responsibility for their own learning by giving them options as to which particular activity, skill, or topic they would like to work on during at least part of the class session.*
- *Get frequent feedback about the class from students, both orally in informal group discussion and in writing from class and teacher evaluation questionnaires.*
- *Ask individual students: 1) how they see their progress before you tell them how you see it; 2) what they learned that day; and 3) what they would like to work on the next time, giving them specific choices, at least at first.*

Margaret Boyter-Escalona is Program Director of the Worker Education Program. She can be reached at the Chicago Teachers' Cente of Northeastern Illinois University, 770 N. Halsted, Chicago, IL 60622; telephone: (312) 733-7330; fax: (312) 733-8188.

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Five Easy Steps To Incorporate SCANS Skills into ESL Lessons

In recent months, the SCANS framework has been suggested as a guide for teachers in ABE and adult ESL programs to use in incorporating employment-related skills into their lessons. The SCANS framework (see box) includes skills such as organizing information, thinking creatively, active listening, and working on teams.

The SCANS skills are those foundation skills and workplace competencies that were identified by the U.S. Department of Labor's Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS), a group of business and education leaders who identified skills for schools to teach in order for students to suceed in the workplace.

The SCANS framework of skills provides a concise and easy-to-use reference for teachers who want to ensure that their classes teach employment-related skills as well as language, but *how* will teachers incorporate these skills in their lessons?

A Five-Step Process

Here is a step-by-step process to guide teachers through their early attempts to implement these ideas in lesson planning and in the classroom.

1. Start with project-like activities related to the unit you are teaching. The extension or expansion activities in a teacher's guide may provide ideas. For example, in a unit on employee health benefits, learners could find out about, present, and write up "The Best Place in Town for Good, Reasonably Priced Health Care"; or learners could learn about common health problems and each learner could make a family tree and record significant facts in his family's medical history (Veramendi *et al.*, 1994). Perhaps you could propose two projects and the class could choose one to do.

2. Think through the steps in implementing the project and how the steps will be accomplished. For example, in learning about common medical conditions, will learners pool their knowledge, interview others, read brochures, or invite guest speakers?

   a. Start small at the beginning. You and the learners can always expand projects that really catch their interest.

   b. Get learners to do as much of the planning as possible; e.g., if persons are interviewed, learners should decide who to interview and what questions to ask.

   c. Make the most of each activity; e.g., if guest speakers are invited, learners should write the invitation letter, prepare questions, summarize what they have learned, and write a thank you.

   d. Try to have a tangible end-product resulting from the activity; e.g., have the class make a booklet or chart summarizing what they have learned about common medical problems.

3. Identify relevant SCANS skills and competencies that will be practiced through the project. Document these in your lesson plan and make them *explicit* to the class. Learners should recognize that they are gathering, organizing, and summarizing information and that these skills are needed on a job and in the community. This is the first step to transferring skills to new situations.

4. Identify relevant language skills to teach at each stage of the project; e.g., letter writing, active listening, question formation, health care vocabulary, the importance of tenses to indicate time periods when describing medical problems.

5. Before you leave a project, identify other units in your curriculum where you will recycle portions of this learning; that is, identify another unit where learners again write letters, conduct interviews, and invite a guest speaker. Explicitly show learners how skills and language transfer from one topic to another. Ask learners for examples of other situations (on the job or in family life) that require similar skills and language.

The SCANS framework provides an easy-to-use checklist for teachers to identify employment-related skills, teach these skills to learners, and assist learners in transferring these skills to many situations in the workplace and in life.

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Judy Jameson is an educational specialist and teacher trainer for the Center for Applied Linguistics Sunbelt Office in Gainesville, Florida. She can be reached at (352) 331-4318. *This article is an adaptation of* Linking Diverse Adult ESL Classes to Employment *published in the October/November 1996 issue of TESOL Matters.*

SCANS FOUNDATION SKILLS

Basic Skills—reading, writing, quantitative operations, active listening, oral communication, interpreting, organizing information and ideas

Thinking Skills—ability to learn and reason, think creatively, make decisions, solve problems

Personal Qualities—responsibility, self-esteem, sociability, self-management, integrity, honesty

SCANS WORKPLACE COMPENTENCIES

Resource Management—organizing; planning; allocating time, money, materials, staff

Interpersonal Skills—working on teams, teaching others, serving customers, leading, negotiating, working effectively within culturally diverse settings

Information Management—acquiring and evaluating facts and data, organizing and maintaining such information, interpreting and communicating the information, using computers

Systems Management—understanding social organization and technological systems, monitoring and correcting performance, improving existing systems, designing new systems

Technology—selecting equipment and tools for the task at hand, applying technology to tasks, maintaining and trouble-shooting equipment

Resources from CAL

These resources have just been published by the Center for Applied Linguistics. Order from Toya Lynch, 1118 22nd Street NW, Washington DC 20037-1214; telephone: (202) 429-9292 ext. 200; fax: (202) 659-5641; e-mail: paie@cal.org. Prices include shipping.

Learning to Work in a New Land: A Review and Sourcebook for Vocational and Workplace ESL by Marilyn Gillespie, 1996, 144 pages.

This monograph provides a concise, but detailed overview of the status of the field of vocational and workplace ESL instruction. It reviews materials from both research and practice to assist practitioners and others interested in preparing adult immigrants and youth to work in the United States. Topics include the role of immigrants in the changing U.S. workforce, the fragmented delivery system, research findings of the last twenty years, what works in vocational education for adult immigrants, the future of ESL in the workplace, and what it will take to meet learners' educational needs. ($7)

(Resources continued)

The Vocational Classroom: A Great Place to Learn English by Elizabeth Platt, 1996, 31 pages.

Using examples from actual vocational classrooms, this paper explores how vocational teachers, ESL teachers, and vocational program administrators can maximize opportunities for limited English proficient students to improve their English as they master vocational content. It includes examples of adapted lessons and a summary of ways that vocational and VESL teachers can facilitate language learning. ($4)

School-to-Work and Vocational ESL for Young Adults compiled by Judith H. Jameson, November 1996, 2 pages.

This annotated bibliography describes resources to assist high schools and community colleges in preparing limited English proficient students for employment through program models such as school-to-work, career academies, occupational clusters, and tech-prep. A few resources that are not specific to ESL have been included because of their relevance to such programs in general. (Free)

Look for PAIE Presentations at TESOL

Language Intensive Training for Employment: Project LITE will describe its program to improve English proficiency and career readiness of LEP high school students. Thursday, March 13, 12:30-1:45 p.m., Convention Center: Poster Station 17.

Connecting Language and Employment Skills: Miriam Burt and Lucinda Branaman will present the latest developments in CAL's Project in Adult Immigration Education. Strategies for ESL employment training will be discussed in light of current funding and policy realities. Friday, March 14, 4:00-4:45 p.m., Sheraton: Mediterranean Room B.

Forming a Small Business Coalition for the Workplace: Robin Schrage, Carole Doyle, and Miriam Burt will present the experience of the English in the Workplace Program, a marketing research project that brought together small businesses to share the costs of course development, space, materials, and teachers for workplace ESL instruction. Thursday, March 13, 10:30-11:15 a.m., Clarion: Salon 3.

Teaching Workplace Content: Get Students Thinking! Spring Institute staff will show how workplace activities can move beyond the read-and-answer-the-questions to active analytical tasks and problem-solving situations that involve students in applying what they've learned. Participants will develop sample materials concerning job safety. Friday, March 14, 2:00-3:45 p.m., Omni: Salon I.

Transitioning from ESL to Job Preparation: Laura Webber will report on the ELESAIR Project which provides ESOL instruction, internship, skills training, and career education to assist low income students entering the workforce. Wednesday, March 12, 10:30-10:50 a.m., Convention Center: In progress session, Room B11C. ~

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Contact Assignments: A Step Out of the Classroom

In November 1995, the Spring Institute for International Studies was awarded a technical assistance grant for curriculum development from CAL's Project in Adult Immigrant Education. Among the products produced by the grant were teaching materials developed for ten-week VESL classes at a wholesale book distribution company in Denver.

The company's management asked that the class emphasize the areas of safety and employee benefits while developing English language skills. The curriculum developers identified several topics within the areas of safety and benefits, chose many company materials to use in the classroom, and adapted these materials for classroom use. Most lessons used task-based exercises that focused on application of content, and most topics ended with a *contact assignment* to assist learners in transferring their new skills and language into the workplace. After learning about safety procedures, for example, the learners' contact assignment was to go into their work areas and read safety signs such as "Eye Protection Required In This Area" and "Danger! High Voltage." Back in the classroom, learners shared what they learned with their classmates. The remainder of this article provides other specific examples of contact assignments that were developed for this course.

Examples of Contact Assignments

Active Listening in Company Meetings: At this company, supervisors and employees indicated that non-native speakers participated very little in team and group meetings where necessary information was presented. As a first step, active listening and note-taking techniques were practiced in the classroom. Then, cloze exercises using outlines for focused listening were developed at two levels of difficulty, using content from the company vision care plan and attendance policy. After learning and practicing active listening and note taking in the classroom, learners applied their skills in a contact assignment: They attended a safety awards luncheon, took notes, and later compared what they heard with their classmates.

Reporting Dangerous Situations: When planning the course, management had requested an emphasis on work safety. After studying safety procedures and the consequences for failing to observe them accurately and fully, learners went into the workplace to locate and report on safety-related locations (eye-wash stations), objects (nearest fire extinguisher in their area), and information (the person who knows CPR on their shift, or incentives the company gives for working safely).

Understanding Health Plans: A comparison of health plans taught comparatives and superlatives, and math and problem-solving skills, as well as information about company benefits. To complete the topic, learners worked to determine the cost of the same illness under their health plan and under other company-sponsored plans.

Understanding Performance Reviews: Many limited English proficient employees had little understanding of the performance review process and its relationship to the amount of employee bonuses. In class, learners used company rating codes and sample hourly performance appraisal forms to rate three "workers" described in case studies. After the learners combined their answers and agreed on weighted ratings, they wrote a performance summary essay for one of the workers in the case studies and then for themselves. Following the classroom activity, several learners asked to see their performance review—the first time any employee had done so in four years!

Using authentic materials and tasks in the classroom and then stepping outside the classroom and using these skills and language in contact assignments in the workplace, provided a high degree of motivation and reinforcement for this company's employees who are second language learners.

Shirley Brod and Barbara Sample prepared the materials and curriculum framework used for this project. They can be reached at Spring Institute for International Studies, 1600 Stout Street, Suite 1550, Denver, CO 80202-3126; telephone: (303) 571-5008; fax: (303) 571-5102. ~

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1996 Technical Assistance Grants Are Awarded

This is the second year that the Project in Adult Immigrant Education has awarded small grants to four projects to develop and document solutions to common workplace or vocational ESL problems. Each awardee's work will be widely disseminated through project publications. The 1996 grantees are described below.

The University of Wisconsin-Whitewater, Whitewater, WI: The university, a technical college, and a manufacturing firm will work together to encourage the replication of a participatory workplace ESL program model that has been successful for the firm. The business is located in a rural county in southeastern Wisconsin where the immigrant population is increasing and ESL learning opportunities are few. Publications will include a description of the program model, a curriculum development guide, and a corporate training manual.

Fairfax County Public Schools, Falls Church, VA: A group of experienced ESL teachers will work to develop and pilot in workplace, vocational, and general ESL classes, lessons that incorporate the SCANS skills in order to improve the workplace readiness of adult learners. The principal publication resulting from the project will be a book of lessons illustrating this integration of workplace readiness and English language skills.

Lutheran Social Services, Sioux Falls, SD: Lutheran Social Services plans to use volunteer, worksite tutors to help employed immigrants continue to progress in English. The project will describe the process of establishing the program including the planning process with the employer, methods of recruiting both tutors and students, tutor training, student evaluation, and ongoing follow-up of tutor-student pairs. A worksite tutor training manual will be prepared and disseminated.

Dade County Public Schools, Miami, FL: This project, housed at Lindsey Hopkins Technical Education Center, will develop methods to improve articulation and communication among vocational, academic, and VESOL teachers and programs. A publication describing their needs assessment, communication model, evaluation results, and suggestions for replication will be produced. ~

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